



**NATIONAL SIKH  
HERITAGE CENTRE  
&  
HOLOCAUST MUSEUM**

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Charity number: 1127592

## **Press release dated 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Home Secretary and Member of Parliament for Maidenhead visit to National Sikh Heritage Centre & Holocaust Museum to unveil World War 1 Commemoration Exhibition.

### **Detail:**

The Home Secretary and Member of Parliament for Maidenhead, Theresa May, will be paying a visit to the National Sikh Museum in Derby, on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

The visit is part of the Museum's events to commemorate 100 years since the outbreak of WW1.

A plaque to commemorate the Sikh soldiers who fought in World War 1 and models of two Sikh soldiers will be officially unveiled. Also on show will be an exhibition of images of Sikh soldiers, military memorabilia and a soldier's uniform. This exhibition has been supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, as part of the 'First World War: then and now' project.

**Museum address:** Princes St, Derby DE23 8NT

**Time of visit:** Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 11.00am

**Contact details:** 01332 402530, [contact@nationalsikhmuseum.com](mailto:contact@nationalsikhmuseum.com)

You are welcome to come and cover the visit.

### ***Background notes:***

- Museum opened in 2009 and is run and funded entirely by volunteers. It is the only Museum of its kind in the world.
- Museum has just completed the building of a grand new entrance and rock sculpture to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of genocide against the Sikhs.

### Sikh contribution in WW1:

- Over 138,000 Indian troops fought in Belgium and France during World War I, many of them Sikhs.
- More than one quarter of these soldiers would become casualties.
- After the bloody battle of Neuve Chapelle in 1915 the Sikh regiments had lost 80% of their men, 3 regiments stood at only 16% of their original complement.
- In the first battle of Ypres at Flanders in 1914 a platoon of Sikhs died fighting to the last man, who shot himself with his last cartridge rather than surrender.
- As one Sikh, Indar Singh (Sikh Soldier in his letter to his family) wrote: "It is quite impossible that I should return alive. [But] don't be grieved at my death, because I shall die arms in hand, wearing the warrior's clothes. This is the most happy death that anyone can die."
- In the last two world wars 83,005 turban wearing Sikh soldiers were killed and 109,045 were wounded.